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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: LAUNCHING A STRUCTURED STRATEGIC DIALOGUE WITH
TURKEY

REF: ANKARA 5825

Classified By: CDA Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) With the October 3 EU decision on Turkey's accession negotiations behind us, it is time to turn toward consolidation of recent gains made in our bilateral relationship and to expand regional cooperation with Ankara. One way to do this is to establish a more structured policy dialogue that would allow us to forge a common frame of reference on shared challenges and opportunities for joint action. For too long, our dialogue with Turkey has been reactive and focused on issues of the day. This approach worked when the two sides had a common understanding of the issues, their relevance to national interests, and the appropriate responses, such as during the Cold War when the threats were clear and Turkey was led by Western-oriented elites. Now, however, it is clear that we must invest more in the relationship if we are to repair past fissures and create a basis for genuine collaboration. A structured and regularly scheduled dialogue could help ensure a common understanding of issues, interests and responses, as well as foster the trust necessary to prevent downturns in the relationship like those experienced over Iraq in recent years. While such a dialogue is likely to require considerable commitment of time and attention, the potential benefits are significant. There are a number of ways that this dialogue could be structured; what follows is one possibility for consideration and debate.

12. (C) We propose an annual meeting of a Structured Strategic dialogue (SSD), rotating between capitals, with working groups meeting between plenaries and reporting thereto. To be successful, the SSD would need to be senior enough to have meaningful dialogue across the spectrum of issues on which we desire Turkey's cooperation -- counter terrorism, Iraq, BMENAI, the Caucasus, Central Asia, etc. We recommend that the SSD be chaired by under secretaries, namely, the US Under Secretary for Political Affairs and the MFA Undersecretary.

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The focus of these conversations would be conceptual rather than operational, with the intent of reaching a common understanding of long term goals and broad purposes.

13. (C) SSD working groups would be more functionally oriented, with each side wielding sufficient clout within their own government to be able to effect the cooperation and collaboration that would be the focus of their discussions. This requires that they be chaired by senior officials. Many issues require interagency coordination; to ensure the Turks bring the right people to the discussion, our delegations would also need to be multi-agency when appropriate. The SSD could create or disband working groups as appropriate, but initially we recommend the following groups be established:

-- Iraq: Led by S/I and GOT Iraq Coordinator Amb Koruturk, this group would examine support for the political process in Iraq and other Turkish support for the effort there.

-- Middle East: Led by NEA and MFA DU/S Uzumcu, this forum would discuss Turkey's support for BMENAI and the Road Map. It would also be a venue to encourage a tougher Turkish line against Syria and Iran.

-- Counterterrorism: Led by S/CT and DU/S Sensoy (or Deputy S/CT and DG Guven), this body should include law enforcement officials (thereby responding to PM Erdogan's suggestion to APNSA Hadley that the Interior Ministry be involved in SSD) as well as representatives of the intelligence community and perhaps Treasury. It would need to focus on actions against the PKK in Europe and elsewhere, but should also address trans-national terrorist threats and ways to disrupt them.

-- Nonproliferation: Led by an ISN DAS and DG Bayer, this working group would focus on nonproliferation cooperation, such as efforts to break up the A.Q.Khan network, to make PSI more effective, and to develop competent export control capabilities in other countries (e.g., Central Asia, Iraq, etc.). Defense, customs and intelligence officials might be included in this working group.

-- Eurasia: Led by EUR and DU/S Apakan, the two sides could

address Turkey-EU, Caucasus (unless the HLDG's Caucasus Working Group is expanded to include political issues, as proposed by EUR DAS Bryza), Central Asia, Black Sea and Cyprus. In the Turkey-EU context, democratization and human rights in Turkey could also be addressed. If the Department shifts Central Asia to SA, then a separate working group on that region, to include Afghanistan, might be advisable.

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